

Development Of Media In Assam

Newspapers

Background

The first printing press in Assam was established by the American Baptist Missionaries in 1836 at Sadiya, a little village in the eastern-most point of the river Brahmaputra.

The history of Assamese newspaper is one hundred and fifty years long which carries a rich legacy of revolutionary times and events throughout the process of its development. Several newspapers and magazines are related with many revolutionary phases of Assamese society and literature. The history of development of Assamese literature is also dependant on newspapers to some extent. The first Assamese newspaper (news magazine) Orunodoi was published in 1846. The American Baptist Missionaries, who were the torch bearers of setting up printing press and publishing newspapers in Assam were also the founding fathers of Orunodoi as well as journalism in Assam. With the colonial touch of the Western Civilization, newspaper service started almost at the same time in the three neighbouring states Assam, Bengal and Orissa. Emergence of Orunodoi : The publication of Orunodoi in Assam is an epoch changing event not only in the history of Assam but also in the social history of this region. Besides fulfilling the objectives of newspaper and magazine together, Orunodoi was a precursor of Assamese grammar, dictionary, drama, poem, various types of articles and school books. The cluster of Assamese letters and spelling system had undergone a process of change and development during the early years of Orunodoi. The structure of Assamese language and way of expression changed too and all these together brought a new rhythm to Assamese. Though the Missionaries had come from a different place with different cultural background yet they prepared here the ground for a new era and a kind of renaissance with all their generosity and finer feelings. That is the greatest contribution of the American Baptist Missionaries towards Assamese society. On one hand Orunodoi had tried to establish Assamese language and literature by giving it a proper structure and form, on the other hand it tried to awake a conscience about education and culture among the people who were concerned with academic and cultural progress of Assam. In short, we can say that — the morning Sun of Assamese language, literature and national feeling gradually rose in the pages of Orunodoi. In 1846, the editor of Orunodoi was Dr Nathan Brown and it was published from Sivasagar Mission Press. From 1861, Orunodoi became Orunodoy according to the new spelling system introduced by Hemchandra Barua. The publication of Orunodoy became irregular since 1882 and at last it was